Town walking guide with map

23 Memorial Kalmenhof

The memorial on Veitenmühlberg in burial grounds behind the former Kalmenhof hospital commemorates more than 600 people who were murdered in the facility during the Nazi era. The hospital building has been a listed building since 2020.

24 Roman Tower

To the south of Idstein the "Limes", the frontier fortification between the Roman Empire and free Germania, ran over hills and valleys from east to west. This reconstruction of one of the watchtowers, which originally stood within sight of each other, was opened in 2002. The Limes is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Hamburg
Hannover   Berlin
Köln   Leipzig
Frankfurt
Stuttgart
München

49   45   Gießen
Limburg   Bad Nauheim
275
417   3   5
Idstein
Taunus-stein   Frankfurt
66
Wiesbaden   3
Mainz

Further Information:

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Tourist Office opening hours:

Tuesday and Wednesday
8.00 – 12.00 and 14.00 – 17.00

Thursday and Friday
8.00 – 12.00 and 14.00 – 18.00

Saturday
11.00 – 16.00

Sundays and public holidays
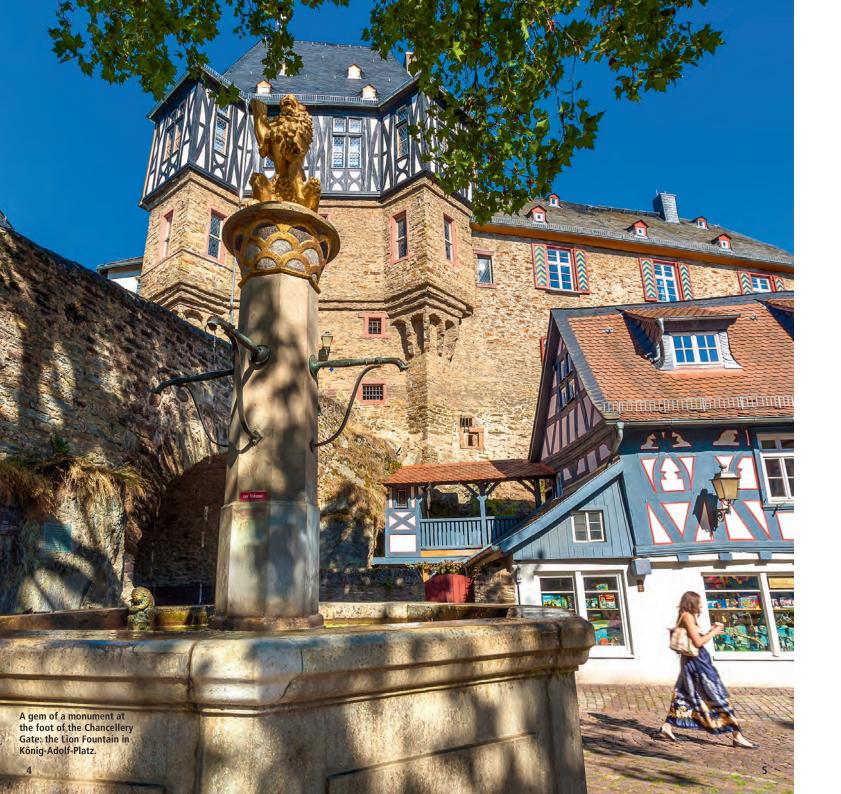14.00 – 17.00

Monday closed

Dear visitors, welcome to Idstein!

Multi-coloured heads peer out from the elaborate half-timbered carvings of the Killingerhaus in König Adolf-Platz. They cast an envious eye on visitors as they marvel at the colourful half-timbered beauty of Idstein's unique old town. Keep a keen lookout while walking through the town and you will find more than just the wild men, wooden mermaids and golden lions. Stroll through the picturesque old town streets, be inspired by the history of this Nassau residence town, admire the magnificent ceiling paintings in the Union Church, climb the Witches' Tower and enjoy the wonderful view from above.

Or simply take it all in at one of the bustling Idstein festivals in this lively town, which is constantly evolving while remaining true to tradition.

The Obergasse runs from the Höerhof in the south to the historic town hall in the centre. Why not stop off at one of the cafes or restaurants.

A gem of a monument at
the foot of the Chancellery
Gate: the Lion Fountain in
König-Adolf-Platz.

Nowadays, students take their high school leaving exams in Idstein Palace. The former School of Architecture is the seat of the Fresenius University of Applied Sciences. The modern local government offices occupy the historic town hall and the buildings in the palace grounds. Stroll past lovingly restored half-timbered buildings which accommodate a wide range of shops and restaurants inviting you to stop and call in.

People are attracted to Idstein by the excellent opportunities for childcare, education and employment, good transport connections, first-rate medical care facilities, a wide range of cultural attractions and leisure facilities and the beautiful landscape of the Taunus region. Open to the new whilst preserving the old, enjoying good times and sticking together in difficult times is what makes us Idsteiners special. And we would like to share our love of our town with our visitors. It is a pleasure to welcome you here!

Idstein – past and present

The first written mention of Idstein was in a document of 1102. In 1287, at the request of Count Adolf of Nassau, Idstein was granted its town charter by King Rudolf of Habsburg. Adolf succeeded Rudolf as German king and reigned from 1292 until1298.

From 1255 to 1721 the town was the residence of the Counts and Princes of Nassau-Idstein and was, as such, almost uninterruptedly, the centre of the whole region.

The chancellery gateway provides the perfect setting for the half-timbered idyll.

The "Alliance Coat of Arms" (around 1630) above the entrance to the palace commemorates the first marriage of Count Johannes of Idstein and Sibylla Magdalena of Baden-Durlach.

The residential palace still contains numerous treasures from its heyday in the 17th and 18th centuries. Stucco ceilings and ceiling paintings by well-known artists have been preserved and lovingly restored.

König-Adolf-Platz was Idstein's first market square. Surrounded by centuries-old half-timbered houses, it now invites you to take a break after your town walk.

After the Nassau-Idstein line became extinct the town gained importance as both the seat of the Nassau (from 1866 Prussian) State Archives and as a judicial and administrative centre. With the establishment of state schools and institutions of further education – with a grammar school (up to 1817), a teacher-training institute (until 1851), an agricultural college (1818 to 1834) and a college of building (from 1869) – the town grew in significance and popularity. The residence attracted many artists for temporary or long-term stays and enabled many craftsmen to earn a decent living. By the end of the 16th century there were numerous tanners living in Idstein, and since the end of the 18th century, Idstein has boasted an important leather industry.

Idstein's treasure is its rich collection of well-maintained half-timbered houses from the 15th to 18th centuries, some of which have unusual carvings. In particular the König-Adolf-Platz, the Obergasse and the old town streets and alleys constantly surprise with half-timbered ensembles. The buildings meet modern living requirements thanks to a comprehensive renovation programme.

In the heart of the old settlement: the group of buildings from the chancellery gate in the south to the keep, commonly known as the "Witches' Tower".

Imposing half-timbered house with three full floors: the Gasthof zur Peif on König-Adolf-Platz.

The Killingerhaus, with its carved facade, is the most elaborately decorated half-timbered house in Idstein.

On the old administration building, built in 1565 under Balthasar Count of Nassau: His coat of arms with the Nassau Lion.

The clock tower of the town church (since 1917 Union Church) has for centuries served as a timepiece for the citizens of Idstein.

The first thing a surprised visitor notices inside the Union Church – a church ceiling as an illustrated Bible

A Lahn-marble figure of Samson carrying the pulpit.

The plain exterior of the Protestant Union Church hides a real treasure trove. With origins dating back to the 14th century, the church has existed in its present form since the 17th century.

On entering, one is immediately struck by the colourful paintings by artists of the Rubens School on the ceiling and walls, along with the lavish decor including columns, arcades, altar, pulpit and baptismal font of polished Lahn marble. The church owes its name to the Nassau Union of 1817 when for the first time Lutherans and Reformed protestants came together in Idstein to form a united regional church.

To the north of the chancellery gate lies the former prince's estate with the picturesque group of administrative buildings from the 16th to 18th centuries, which today belong to the town hall; the town's outstanding landmark, the so-called "Witches' Tower", whose construction dates back to 1170, 1240 and 1500; and the delightful palace garden, located on the site of the historic precursor.

Finally, the Renaissance palace, which until 1721 was the residence of the Counts and Princes of Nassau-Idstein, can be reached from the north via a massive arched bridge. Subsequently used for a variety of purposes, it has housed a high school since 1946.

Today Idstein is a thriving medium-sized hub with a good infrastructure incorporating eleven boroughs, and conveniently located in the north of the Frankfurt-Rhine-Main metropolitan region with excellent rail, road and motorway connections.

Discover Idstein!

1 Killinger House (1615)

Tourist information and town museum
The so-called Killingerhaus is one of the most beautiful of Idstein's half-timbered houses and the one with the most richly carved ornamentation. It was built in 1615 by the Count's bailiff, Johann Conrad Killing (d. 1630) and his wife Anna Margarethe Loeber, daughter of the Nassau bailiff in (Bad) Ems. The couple remained childless and over the centuries the building had various owners, until in 1916 the town acquired the listed property.

2 König-Adolf-Platz

The square is Idstein's "front parlour". In 1946 it was renamed after the only German king from the House of Nassau, King Adolf (ca. 1250 - 1298). As a market square, it has always been hub of the town where town meetings and court proceedings were held. Today the square, surrounded by half-timbered houses, is used for various festivals and events.

3 Crooked House (1727)

The four-storey half-timbered house, which is unusually tall for Idstein, was built in 1727 by the head of the town militia, Johann Jacob Nicolay. Between 1736 and 1745 the Idstein pharmacy occupied the left part of the building; later used as a business and residential building. After a complete renovation from 1995 to 1997, the Crooked House became part of the Idstein town hall. Structural defects caused it to tilt.

4 Town Hall (1698)

The building was built with financial support from the ruling Count as a bridge over a main road (a pedestrian zone since 1986) and was completed in 1698. At first the administration only occupied two of the room offices. The remainder of rooms were used for the fire pump and the flour scales, a guard room, a holding cell, the apartment for the magistrate's assistant and the granary. In 1928 it was badly damaged by falling rocks and again by fire in 1947.

5 **Chancellery Gate** (1497)
The chancellery gate, which marks the dividing line between the municipal area in the south and the Count's lands in the north, was built in 1497 as the Count's Chancellery under the rule of Count Philipp I of Nassau-Idstein. Other uses included a guardhouse and prison cell, a torture chamber, a granary and servants' living quarters. Weddings are conducted in the grand reception room of the Idstein registry office on the first floor.

6 **Group of buildings in the former palace grounds**
Construction of the long line of buildings of the former palace annexe began in 1565. They are now connected to the town hall and used by the local government. The upper floors are half-timbered with the lower floor providing a solid base. Bay windows and tail gables are decorative elements. The official entrance to the chancellery gate was under the bay window.

7 **Old County Court**
According to the date above the entrance to the cellar, this massive stone building with its half-timbered gable and stair tower was built as the "New Chancellery" in 1588 by Count Johann Ludwig I of Nassau-Idstein. Nassau became a Prussian province in 1866 and from 1867 to 1938 the building housed the Idstein county court, hence its present name. Today the town administration uses the building for various purposes.

8 **Witches' Tower**
The tower is the oldest surviving structure in Idstein and the town's landmark. It was built in individual stages in around – 1170, 1240 and 1500. After several minor alterations and additions in the 18th century, it has hardly changed since 1810. It owes its name "Witches' Tower" to a popular 19th century trend and has nothing to do with the witch hunts that took place in Idstein in the 17th century.

11 **Tithe Barn** (ca. 1745)
The building was located in the palace grounds and was part of the Count's cattle farm. Tithe grain (the legally required payment of grain to the Count) was stored on the upper floor and in the two lofts. The court stables were on the ground floor. From 1819 to 1834 it housed a veterinary clinic affiliated to the Idstein Agricultural Institute. In around 1930 the upper floors were converted into apartments. Since 1977 Idstein Youth Music School.

9 **Princes' Palace**
Incorporating parts of a previous building, the Renaissance style residence of the Counts and Princes of Nassau-Idstein was built mainly between 1614 and 1634. In 1721 the Nassau-Idstein line became extinct. The palace was used first as the Nassau Central Archive, then in succession as a convalescent home, a military hospital, a barrack, a hostel for extracurricular school activities, a teacher-training college and again as a military hospital. Since 1946 it has housed the Pestalozzi high school.

10 **Palace garden**
A pleasure garden in the grounds of Idstein Palace can be traced as far back as 1566. In 1650 Count Johannes played a major role in its development, building artificial grottos, purchasing exotic and valuable plants and using professional gardeners to maintain the beds. The Count commissioned artists to paint colourful garden landscapes. Today the same perennials, summer flowers and roses flourish once more.

12 **Old Fire Station** (1927)
The first fire station with a hose tower stood in the immediate vicinity of today's "Old Fire Station", which backs onto the "Alte Realschule", and is used as the fire department's training facility. The fire station with a hose tower, whose half-timbered construction resembles buildings in the old town, was completed In 1927. It was used by the Idstein Volunteer Fire Brigade, founded in 1876, until they moved to the modern fire department in 1982. Since 2004 "Idsteiner Brauhaus".

13 **Fresenius University, formerly "College of Building"**
  (1891–1893/1910)
The outstanding brick building on the Limburger Strasse was built for the Idsteiner College of Building, a municipal institution founded in 1869. The "students" became a stable economic factor. In 1993 the institute was moved to Wiesbaden. In 1995, the Fresenius University, a state-recognized private university, took over the property. Departments: Chemistry & Biology and Health & Social Affairs.

15 **Löherplatz with Tanners' Workshop, Town Wall**
Löhergasse, traditional location of the leather trade. The square and the surrounding buildings were built on the site of what was until 1957 the largest Idstein leather factory. Running north to south, the original course of the town wall (paving!). Tanners' Workshop (1816), the last of around 30 buildings of this type. The wooden slats in the gable roof were used as ventilation for the leather that was hung up to dry. Since the 1920s glazier/carpentry shop. 1993 acquisition by the town; since 2002 a location for cultural events.

14 **St. Martin's Catholic Church**
(1965)
After the Reformation there was only one Protestant congregation in Idstein. After the Catholic community was re-establis-hed in 1806, they were given the former palace chapel for worship, but it soon tur-ned out to be too small. The neo-Gothic Magdalen Church was consecrated in 1888. A result of the strong influx of Catholics in the post-war period, the small church was replaced by Johannes Krahn's modern new building "St Martin" (consecrated in 1965).

16 **Civic Hall** (1987)
On the 700th anniversary of the granting of the town charter, the town of Idstein opened its civic hall, with a restaurant, bow-ling alley, underground car park and rooms for the town library. In the hall, which is equipped with the latest technology, people attend concerts, theatre and dance functions, seminars, lectures and meetings.

17 Union Church, Protestant (ca. 1340)

Built around 1340 as the collegiate church of St. Martin, it incorporated older parts of a previous building. In 1669 it was converted into the Protestant court church. Rich use of Lahn marble for the arcades, columns, baptismal font, altar, pulpit and tombs. On the ceiling 38 canvas paintings based on biblical themes in the style of the Rubens school, the painters Michael Angelo Immenradt and Johann von Sandrart. Tomb of the Counts and Princes of Nassau.

18 Grandpierre Print Shop

Door frames on the southern part of the building bear the date 1612; The "Zur Weiße Taube" inn (White Dove Inn) stood here until around 1720. The northern wing was only expanded later. From 1721 it belonged to the von Hayn family (daughter H.L. von Hayn was a Pietist); from 1770 it was the property of the County gamekeeper, Schott von Schottenstein. From 1818 Agricultural Institute, from 1835 finance offices, from 1898 Grandpierre printing company. The oval ornaments on the house are the work of Ferdinand Abt based on motifs by Bertel Thorvaldsen.

19 Höerhof (1620)

In 1620, Henrich Heer, the master builder of Idstein Palace, was gifted the building plot in the Obergasse by his employer, Count Ludwig II. Heer constructed the building on a solid stone base with half-timbered upper floors, bay window porch and "Welscher Hood", clearly copying palace elements. From 1910 to 1990 owned by the painter Ernst Toepfer and his family, since 1992 a hotel and restaurant.

20 Stockheimer Hof (1599 and earlier), later Kalmenhof

Members of the von Stockheim family were palace stewards to the Counts of Nassau from the 14th century onwards. After the family died out in 1702, the property with the manor house frequently changed hands. From 1768 -1776 it was in the hands of the von Kalm family, after whom it is still named. In 1888, a group of Frankfurt citizens founded an "institution for feeble-minded children" in it. The mansion has been privately owned since 2006.

21 Felix-Lahnstein-Straße, formerly Judengasse

The "prayer house" of the Jewish religious community in Idstein was located at today's Felix-Lahnstein-Straße 1, a half-timbered 18th century building that was rebuilt and expanded several times. Because of the synagogue the street was for a time called the Judengasse. After the Second World War it was renamed after the last head of the Jewish community, Felix Lahnstein, who died in New York in 1959.

22 Market Square

After the destruction of the town wall along with its "Heaven's Gate", the market square came into being as the "Lower Market Square" as part of the town's eastward expansion in around 1700. The present fountain made of Lahn marble had at least two precursors, which quickly proved to be inadequate for the large population of the new town.

Wörsdorf, Walsdorf, B275

Heftrich, Waldems, B275
Jüdischer Friedhof 300 m

02/2021

Schlossteich

P

Limburger Straße

Fußweg

Im Forst

Am Tiergarten

Am Tiergarten

Heftricher Straße

Heftricher Straße

Höhenweg

Gymnasium

9 Schloss

Fußweg

Sporthalle
Am Hexenturm

Am Hexenturm

Schlossgasse

Hexen-
turm

P

Saalburgweg

Amtsgericht

Schulgasse

8

10

11

Marktplatz

12

7

22

Gerichtsstraße

Polizei

6

5

Himmelsgasse

Fußweg

Kreuzgasse

Escher Straße

ZOB
Schulgasse

H

Rathaus

4

König-
Adolf-
Platz

Kreuzgasse

Bermbacher Weg

3

2

21

Borngasse

Felix-Lahnstein-Straße

Weiherwiese

Kreuzzahlen Fußweg

13

i

1

Hochschule
Fresenius

Rodergasse

Martin-Luther-Str.

Schulze-Delitzsch-Str.

Löhergasse

17

Obergasse

Kaffeegasse

Zuckerberg

Wohnmobilstellplatz
(Himmelsbornweg) 450 m

Wagenerstraße

A.-Schweitzer-Str.

Fußweg

Kreuzgärten

P

P

Löherplatz

15

18

Fußweg

Schützen-
hausstraße

16 Stadt-
halle

Frölenberg

Schulze-Delitzsch-Str.

P

P

19

L3026

Bahnhofstraße

20

Fußweg

Wiesbadener Straße

Veitenmühlweg

Vitos Kalmenhof

Am Friedhof

† † †
Friedhof

P

Seelbacher Straße

Niedernhausen
Römerturm nach ca. 2 km

14

†

Schillerstraße

Veitenmühlberg

Schöne Aussicht

Dasbacher Weg

24

Bahnhof
A3 Köln–Frankfurt, B275

23 Gedenkstätte für
Euthanasieopfer 100 m

0   100 Meter   i Tourist-Info   Pedestrian zone   traffic calmed area